

Note by the Secretariat – summary of discussions during the budget briefing held online on 10 October 2023

1. On 10 October 2023, the Secretariat convened an online briefing on the budget for the MP trust fund and the financial reports for the VC and MP trust funds. This note summarises the questions asked by the parties and the responses provided by the Secretariat during the briefing.
2. After the presentation by the Secretariat, following questions were raised by the EU:
 - a) **Consultants** - What is the basis of the estimated budget of \$85,000 for the year 2024 which is the same amount as in past years even though in 2022 the budget was not fully utilized? In 2023 as well, the budget as at 30 September 2023 has only been partially utilized.
 - b) **Operating costs** – The budget for the year 2024 has increased by \$55,000 in the recommended scenario compared to Zero Nominal Growth (ZNG) scenario. What are the implications if the parties approve the ZNG scenario? And why the increase of \$4,000 on two budget lines?
 - c) **Public awareness and communications** – Are statistics available on the usage/download of the mobile app that was launched during the forty-fifth meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) in July 2023?
 - d) **Communication campaign activities funded by cash balance** – The budget of \$160,000 requested for 2024 is \$130,000 more than what was requested in 2023. Please explain the purpose of the proposed increase.
 - e) **Travel of Article 5 parties** – The budget for 2024 has been maintained at the same level in the two scenarios and for 2023. In the explanatory notes for the 2023 budget, the average cost per participant was \$6,000. Is the same average cost being used for the year 2024? What staff travel rules apply to meeting participants' travel?
3. The Secretariat provided the following responses to the questions:
 - a) The consultancy budget is used by the Secretariat for the purposes of: (i) obtaining advice on scientific and technical issues; (ii) developing and launching new systems to comply with requests from the parties or requirements of the UN Environment Programme, for example, the development of Environmental Management System (EMS) and establishment of a course on ozone treaties; (iii) preparing/editing briefing notes and awareness raising materials; etc. At the time of preparing the budget for the subsequent year, such needs are not always known and hence it is not possible to estimate costs on a per consultancy basis. The Secretariat therefore maintains the budget at the same level of \$85,000 as has been the case in the past few years. The usage of the budget is transparently reported in the following year.
 - b) The budget under the 'operating costs' category is used for: (i) expendables/supplies; (ii) non-expendables; (iii) premises rent; (iv) operation and maintenance of equipment; (v) reporting costs; and (v) sundries. As is clear from the nature of expenditures, this budget category covers some of the basic day-to-day needs to run the operations of the Secretariat. Should the parties approve the ZNG scenario, which would allocate \$55,000 less for operating costs than the recommended scenario, the Secretariat will still deliver on its mandate but with operational challenges which will possibly impact on the timeliness of deliverables.
 - c) There were 421 downloads of the mobile app launched during OEWG45, the download count being very close to the number of participants (approx. 450) who attended the said meeting.

- d) The budget of \$160,000 requested from the cash balance for the communication campaign will be used for:
- **Tertiary education material (phase III)** content development estimates are based on the costs for phases I and II. An initial cost of at least \$60,000 is estimated for early consultations and development of potential material. Depending upon the outcomes, another budget allocation may be requested in the year 2025.
 - **Videos documenting the achievements of the ozone treaties for three anniversaries** – To commemorate the three upcoming anniversaries (40th year for the VC in 2025, 10th year for Kigali Amendment in 2026 and 40th year for the MP in 2027), the Secretariat would like to embark in 2024 on the development of videos. It is anticipated that \$100,000 will be required to kickstart the process. A review of the development stage of all three videos is expected at the end of 2024. Based on the outcome of such review, additional funds will be requested in 2025 and beyond.
 - **Translation of the Education Portal material into other languages of the United Nations** – In response to the request from some parties, resources permitting, the Secretariat plans to have the education portal material translated into other UN languages.
- e) For 2024, travel of A5 parties is budgeted at an average of \$5,000 per participant. This amount is arrived at on the basis of estimated travel costs received from the UN travel agent and also the costs for similar meetings in the recent past. The average amount of \$6,000 was only used for the year 2023 due to the high costs of tickets immediately after the resumption of regular travel in 2022 occasioned by the pandemic. As for the travel rules pertaining to the class of travel, funded participants are flown on economy class irrespective of the duration of the journey. Travel rules that relate to staff members do not apply to the participants.
4. The delegate from Barbados had a question on the impact of the difference between the ZNG and the recommended budgets but confirmed that the responses to the questions from the EU addressed her question.
5. With no additional questions from the floor, the meeting was concluded with the confirmation that the [presentation](#) made during the meeting and the summary of discussions will be uploaded in the [meeting portal](#).
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